

Message Text

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21

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R 150330Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1027

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0317

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TFOR, PBOR, PGOV, PK, AF

SUBJ:DEPFONMIN ABDULLAH TALKS TO SUNDAY TIMES

1. SUMMARY: GOA HAS PUBLISHED TEXT OF JANUARY 9 INTERVIEW OF DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ABDULLAH BY LONDON SUNDAY TIMES CORRESPONDENT N.A. MASCARENHAS. TEXT HAS BEEN SENT BY USINFO. SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF INTERVIEW DEALS WITH PAK/AFGHAN RELATED ITEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. GOA HAS BROADCAST AND PUBLISHED TRANSCRIPT OF JANUARY 9 INTERVIEW WITH DEPFONMIN ABDULLAH BY N.A. MASCARENHAS OF LONDON SUNDAY TIMES (TEXT BY USINFO SEPTTEL). WHILE KABUL TIMES TEXT HEADLINED "KABUL WELCOMES PAKISTANI GOOD WILL: WAHEED ABDULLAH" FOR READERS OF ENGLISH, VERNACULAR PRESS HEADINGS TRANSLATED AS "DURAND LINE HAS NO VALIDITY FOR AFGHANISTAN". MUCH FAMILIAR GROUND WAS COVERED IN INTERVIEW, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND INDEED CORRESPONDENT SEEMED TO HAVE EMPLOYED

TECHNIQUE OF RECYCLING OLD ABDULLAH STATEMENTS AS QUESTIONS, ALMOST GUARANTEEING THIS RESULT. HIGHLIGHTS AS FOLLOWS:

3. BHUTTO INVITATION. WHILE ABDULLAH STATED THAT "PRE-MATURE RELEASE" OF INFORMATION WAS CAUSE OF SUSPICION TO AFGHAN OFFICIALS, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHETHER ANNOUNCEMENT WAS JUST PAKISTANI PROGAGANDA MOVE, HE REPLIED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO KNOW WITH CERTAINTY BUT " IF THERE IS GOOD WILL WE WELCOME IT", GIVING RISE TO OPTIMISTIC ENGLISH HEADLINE. ABDULLAH REITERATED GOA WILLINGNESS TO HAVE TALKS WITH GOP. HOWEVER, IMMEDIATELY AFTER STATING THAT AFGHANISTAN HAS NO PRECONDITIONS, HE SAID THAT GOA HAS SUPPORTED AND NOW SUPPORTS DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN GOP AND IMPRISONED PASHTUN AND BALUCH LEADERS.

4. DURAND LINE, BALUCHI REFUGEES. IN RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION OF THE DURANT LINE, ABDULLAH REITERATED STANDARD THOUGH SELDOM SUCCINCTLY EXPRESSED GOA POSITION THAT LINE IS ARTIFICIAL, ILLEGAL AND IMPOSED THROUGH FORCE BY COLONIAL POWERS. (IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, ABDULLAH PROTESTED "BUT WHAT COULD I SAY IN REPLY TO A DIRECT QUESTION LIKE THAT?") ABDULLAH REPEATED THAT 344 BALUCHIS HAD SOUGHT REFUGE IN AFGHANISTAN. AND STATED THAT MORE WERE ANTICIPATED AFTER THE PASSAGE OF WINTER. (RADIO AFGHANISTAN ANNOUNCED JANUARY 13 THAT 200 MORE BALUCHIS HAD SOUGHT REFUGE IN AFGHANISTAN AND ABDULLAH ALSO MENTIONED THIS IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR. "ACTUALLY, WE WERE QUITE SURPRISED SINCE THE WEATHER IS SO COLD AND THE ROADS SO BAD").

5. CHINA, SOVIET UNION. IN CONTEXT OF AFGHAN RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION AND CHINA, ABDULLAH REITERATED HISTORY OF FRIENDSHIP WITH SOVIET UNION, AND IN FIRST PUBLIC ADMISSION STATED THAT RELATIONS WITH CHINA WERE "RELATIVELY COLD" IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE DAOUD REGIME, BUT WERE IMPROVED DURING RECENT PEKING VISIT BY PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY NAIM AND THAT NOW CHINESE CONVINCED THAT 1973 COUP WAS "NATIONAL, ABSOLUTELY AFGHAN REVOLUTION" -- OBVIOUS IMPLICATION BEING THAT CHINESE SUSPECTED SOVIET HAND BEHIND

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COUP THAT BROUGHT DAOUD TO POWER.

6. ABDULLAH MENTIONED SEVERAL COMINGS AND GOINGS IN HIS INTERVIEW INCLUDING FIRST PUBLIC MENTION HERE OF PRESIDENT DAOUD'S PLANNED MEETING WITH SHAH OF IRAN. ABDULLAH ALSO MADE CASUAL, ALMOST OFF-HAND REFERENCE OF UPCOMING HIGH LEVEL USAID VISITOR BUT DID SO IN CONTEXT OF CONTRASTING REFERENCE TO RUSSIAN AND PRC GENEROSITY TO AFGHANISTAN.

7. CONSTITUTION: IN RESPONSE TO INEVITABLE QUESTION ON PROSPECTS FOR NEW CONSTITUTION ABDULLAH SAID THAT BECAUSE OF PAST EXPERIENCE THE GOA HAS NO WISH TO BE "HASTY" AND REFERED TO DAOUD'S STATEMENTS THAT IT WILL BE "PROGRESSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC" AND "NATURALLY WITH PROVISIONS FOR POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS". IF "POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS" MEANS POLITICAL PARTIES, STATEMENT REPRESENTS DEPARTURE FROM MAJORITY OF PAST HINTS WHICH POINT TO SINGLE PARTY SYSTEM.

8. COMMENT: ON BALANCE, ABDULLAH'S STATEMENTS ON PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS MUST BE SEEN AS HARDLINE. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF STIFF AND SET PIECE RESPONSES COULD WELL HAVE BEEN DETERMINED BY THE QUESTIONS THEMSELVES.

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